



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Public Health

JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

CYNTHIA A. HARDING, M.P.H.
Chief Deputy Director

313 North Figueroa Street, Room 806
Los Angeles, California 90012
TEL (213) 240-8117 • FAX (213) 975-1273

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Gloria Molina
First District

Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District

Zev Yaroslavsky
Third District

Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

April 30, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *Jonathan E. Fielding MD*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **AVIAN INFLUENZA A H7N9**

This is a report on the current status and efforts related to Avian Influenza A H7N9. As of the date of this memo, there are no reported cases of H7N9 in the United States. All identified cases have a reported link to China. Given the significant amount of travel and trade Los Angeles County has with China, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is carefully monitoring the situation including conducting surveillance locally, engaging the local medical community, keeping the media and public informed, and working with appropriate external agencies including the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Current Status

As of April 26, 2013, there have been 122 reported cases of human infection due to avian influenza A H7N9, of whom 23 died. Cases have been reported in China from five provinces (Anhui, Henan, Jiangsu, Shandong, and Zhejiang) and two municipalities (Beijing and Shanghai), and one case has been reported in Taiwan. Of the cases where data are available, dates of illness onset range from February 19 to April 16, 2013. As of now, we know that: all infections were acquired while in China; there are currently no reports of person to person transmission; and the majority of cases reported close contact with animals, mostly poultry (chickens).

To date, the federal government has not issued any travel warnings associated with H7N9. However, people who visit China are advised to avoid live animal markets and contact with live

poultry. Anyone who becomes sick with flu-like illness within 10 days after returning from China should see their physician right away and report their travel history.

Preparations for vaccine production are in process but no decision has been made about actual production. There is likely little cross-reactivity with other recent flu vaccines to this variant. All isolates are sensitive to the antivirals oseltamivir/Tamiflu® and zanamivir/Relenza®.

Current Actions

DPH is taking several steps to respond to the current situation, as well as planning and preparing for different possible future scenarios.

- *Surveillance*

DPH has alerted all hospital infection control professionals (ICP) to notify facility staff to inquire about recent travel history during intake for all patients with influenza-like illness and to contact DPH to assist with potential diagnosis, specimen collection, and infection prevention as needed. DPH also has reminded all ICPs that the case definition for potential cases might change and that DPH will update them on the situation as it evolves. DPH tracks all incoming calls of potential cases using a standard intake form to document and itemize suspect cases. Additionally, DPH tracks submissions to the Public Health Lab to diagnose suspect cases.

- *Notification to Local Medical Community*

On April 17, 2013, DPH issued a Health Alert via email to the local medical community informing them of H7N9 and directing them to immediately report to DPH any suspect cases or queries about identification, treatment and infection control. This message was also sent in the DPH Influenza Watch newsletter which was distributed on April 26, 2013. In addition to these efforts, DPH maintains ongoing interactions with local hospital infection professionals to make them aware of how to identify suspect cases and direct them to immediately report any unusual cases. DPH is prepared to send out additional information to the local medical community as the evolving situation warrants.

- *Public Health Laboratory Preparedness*

The Public Health Laboratory currently has the capacity to receive specimens and rule out other respiratory diseases, including other influenza strains. DPH is building the capability to test for H7N9 and will do so as soon as the necessary materials are available from CDC. In the meantime, after the initial tests to rule out other respiratory diseases are performed by DPH, all suspect H7N9 specimens will be forwarded to the CDC for definitive testing.

- *Informing the media and the public*

To date, DPH has received few media requests and public inquiries about H7N9. Attached is a Health Advisory that will be posted on DPH's website on May 1, 2013 in English,

Each Supervisor
April 30, 2013
Page 3

Spanish and Chinese. DPH will share this Advisory with the consulates of Taiwan and China. Additionally, DPH will begin working with 2-1-1 to provide them answers to common questions and will update these as needed.

DPH has relationships with several local Chinese community leaders, agencies, and community groups that might have an increased interest in these events. DPH staff will reach out to them to share pertinent information and offer services such as presentations and subject matter expertise.

We will provide you updated information on important developments. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

JEF:rfk

Attachment

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors



For Immediate Release:

April 30, 2013

HEALTH ADVISORY:

Update: Avian Influenza A (H7N9) Virus

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is closely monitoring the avian influenza A (H7N9) virus situation in China. At this time, all cases to date have contracted the disease in Mainland China and no cases have been found in the United States.

On April 1, 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported the first known human infections with a novel avian influenza A (H7N9) virus in China. As of April 29, 2013, a total of 126 cases have been reported, including 24 deaths. Cases have been reported in China from five provinces and two municipalities; one case has been reported from Taiwan in an individual who had recently traveled to China. The dates of illness onset range from February 19 to April 16, 2013. Direct contact with poultry has been identified as the major cause of infection. The H7N9 virus can be treated with the antiviral medications oseltamivir and zanamivir. Vaccine producers are also preparing to develop a vaccine in case one is needed.

For the latest updates on avian influenza A (H7N9) activity, please visit the WHO website: <http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-virus.htm>.

Currently, no travel restrictions have been issued and it is safe to visit China. If you are traveling, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to advise travelers and Los Angeles County residents to follow good hand hygiene and food safety practices and to avoid live animal markets and contact with live poultry while visiting China.

For general information about protecting yourself when traveling to China and other countries, please visit the CDC website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.

For those who are traveling to/from China and become sick, please follow the tips below:

- If you become sick while you are still in China, visit the U.S. Department of State website at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1195.html to find a list of local doctors and hospitals. Many foreign hospitals and clinics are accredited by the Joint Commission International. A list of accredited facilities is available at their website: www.jointcommissioninternational.org.
- Delay your travel home until after you have recovered from your illness or your doctor says it is ok to travel.



- If you become sick with fever, coughing, or shortness of breath after you return to the United States, seek prompt medical attention. Be sure to tell your doctor about your recent travel to China.

Human infections with avian influenza are rare but do occur, most commonly after exposure to infected poultry (bird-to-human spread). Person-to-person spread of bird flu is thought to have occurred rarely in the past, most notably with avian influenza A (H5N1). Based on this experience, limited human-to-human spread of this H7N9 virus would not be surprising.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: @LAPublicHealth.

###